UNITED
NATIONS

E

Economic and Social Council

Distr.
GENERAL

E/1992/61
1 June 1992

ORIGINAL: ENGLISH

Substantive session of 1992
29 June-31 July 1992
Item 11 of the provisional agenda

REGIONAL COOPERATION

Transport and Communications Decade for Asia and the Pacific, 1985-1994

Report of the Secretary-General

SUMMARY

A Transport and Communications Decade for Asia and the Pacific during the period 1985-1994 was proclaimed by the General Assembly in its resolution 39/227. The Economic and Social Council, in its resolution 1984/78 on the Decade, inter alia, requested the Secretary-General to submit a report on the implementation of that resolution to the Council at its second regular session of 1986, and every two years thereafter until the end of the Decade.

The present report consists of two parts. The first part concerns the activities undertaken by the secretariat of the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific; it highlights the conclusions of the mid-term review of the Decade and subsequent directives of the Commission for reorientation in policy and strategy for the second quinquennium of the Decade and explains the preparations for the second quinquennium (phase II). The second part of the report covers the background and present status of activities undertaken by the secretariat of the Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia.

92-23334 3388e (E) 100692 190692

/...

CONTENTS

		Paragraphs	Page
Part one:	Activities undertaken by the secretariat of the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific		
Summary		1 - 3	3
I.	CONCLUSIONS OF THE MID-TERM REVIEW	4 - 8	3
II.	DIRECTIVES OF THE COMMISSION FOR PHASE II OF THE DECADE	9 - 12	4
III.	ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COUNCIL RESOLUTION 1991/75	13 - 16	5
IV.	PREPARATION FOR PHASE II OF THE DECADE	17 - 27	6
	A. Modalities of preparation	17 - 22	6
	B. Preparatory activities	23 - 27	8
Part two:	Activities undertaken by the secretariat of the Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia		
I.	BACKGROUND AND PRESENT STATUS	28 - 49	9

Part one: Activities undertaken by the secretariat of the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific

Summary

1. The present report presents a summary of developments in the implementation of General Assembly resolution 39/227 of 18 December 1984 on the Transport and Communications Decade for Asia and the Pacific, 1985-1994, which have taken place in the region of the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP) since the last report of the Secretary-General on the Decade to the Economic and Social Council (E/1990/57), at its second regular session of 1990.

2. It highlights the conclusions of the mid-term review of the Decade and the subsequent directives of the Commission for reorientation in policy and strategy for the second quinquennium of the Decade, hereafter referred to as phase II of the Decade, as well as those of the Council.

3. This report also explains the preparations for phase II of the Decade, which have been undertaken so far by the ESCAP secretariat in close cooperation with the member and associate member Governments of the Commission, and related international and intergovernmental organizations.

I. CONCLUSIONS OF THE MID-TERM REVIEW

4. The last report of the Secretary-General, submitted to the Council in 1990, constituted an interim presentation on the findings of the mid-term review of the Transport and Communications Decade for Asia and the Pacific. At the time of reporting, the intercountry mission had visited 18 out of the 24 selected developing countries in the region. The findings and recommendations of the mission were to be then submitted to a meeting of senior government officials, to be convened prior to the thirteenth session of the Committee on Shipping, Transport and Communications in December 1990.

5. Visits to the remaining countries took place during the period May-September 1990. The countries visited were those of the South Asian subregion, namely, Bangladesh, India, Maldives, Nepal, Pakistan and Sri Lanka. A concise analytical report was prepared by an independent consultant based on the information available regarding the preparation and implementation of the programmes of the Decade during its first quinquennium and the views of the countries visited by the intercountry mission.

6. The report suggested that the implementation of the programmes of the Decade during the first quinquennium had been less than optimum for the following four major reasons:

(a) Poor formulation of the strategy of the Decade;

(b) Lack of commitment to the Decade by the countries concerned;

(c) Absence of cooperation between the relevant United Nations organizations and specialized agencies;

(d) Weakness in the management of the Decade.

7. At the same time, the report acknowledged that substantial accomplishments in the transport and communications sectors had been achieved in the region and that the work of the ESCAP secretariat in those sectors had often been praised during the intercountry mission, such praise having had particular reference to the quality of the seminars and workshops and the value of some advisory services.

8. The report concluded that the objectives of the Decade remained fully valid at its mid-point and that the Decade should continue to its full term. It recommended, however, that certain changes be made in preparation for phase II of the Decade, including focus on regional activities, redesign of the programmes, closer inter-agency cooperation, more active participation of countries and intergovernmental organizations and the lead role to ESCAP in management of the Decade. Based on that report, the secretariat made recommendations for phase II of the Decade.

II. DIRECTIVES OF THE COMMISSION FOR PHASE II OF THE DECADE

9. The Inter-agency Consultative Group Meeting on the Transport and Communications Decade for Asia and the Pacific, 1985-1994, was convened at Bangkok on 10 and 11 December 1990 and was followed by the Meeting of Senior Government Representatives Responsible for the Transport and Communications Decade for Asia and the Pacific, 1985-1994, which met from 12 to 14 December 1990 to consider the conclusions and recommendations resulting from the report of the mid-term review. The report of the meetings were then considered by the Committee on Shipping, Transport and Communications, at its thirteenth session, which was held immediately after the meeting of senior government representatives, at Bangkok, from 17 to 21 December 1990.

10. In pursuance of the recommendation of the Committee, the Commission, at its forty-seventh session held at Seoul in April 1991, adopted resolution 47/10 on phase II of the Transport and Communications Decade for Asia and the Pacific, 1985-1994. 1/

11. In that resolution, the Commission, inter alia:

(a) Decided that the programmes for the second quinquennium of the Decade should be redesigned and implemented in such a way as both to avoid the shortcomings identified during the first quinquennium and to take into account the anticipated development of the transport and communications sectors in the region over the remaining period of the Decade;

(b) Also decided that the period of the second quinquennium of the Decade was to be modified to 1992-1996 to coincide with the period of the

medium-term plan, 1992-1997, to enable adequate preparation to be made for the regional action programme;

(c) Invited all members and associate members to participate actively in the implementation of the programmes for the decade;

(d) Requested the Executive Secretary to take the lead role in the coordination, monitoring and reporting of the Decade as recommended in the report of the mid-term review;

(e) Invited donor countries and agencies to provide the requisite funds to enable the Commission to implement a regional action programme for the Decade and its activities of greater impact in the field of transport and communications for the remainder of the Decade;

(f) Urged the United Nations Development Programme to provide funds, in particular from its Special Programme Resources for developing the regional action programme.

12. In that resolution, the Commission also supported the convening of a meeting of ministers responsible for transport and communications in 1992 to consider and recommend to the Commission the regional action programme for the remainder of the Decade.

III. ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COUNCIL RESOLUTION 1991/75

13. The Economic and Social Council, in its resolution 1991/75 on phase II of the Transport and Communications Decade for Asia and the Pacific, 1985-1994, recognized the critical role of transport and communications in economic development and the importance, therefore, of the improvement and growth of transport and communications infrastructure and services in a manner commensurate with the expected growth of all sectors of the economy generating the demand for transport and communications.

14. In the same resolution, the Council endorsed Commission resolution 47/10 and in particular:

(a) Recommended that the General Assembly change the period of the second quinquennium of the Decade to 1992-1996;

(b) Urged all appropriate international organizations, particularly the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), to contribute effectively to the formulation and implementation of a regional action programme for the second quinquennium of the Decade;

(c) Requested the Executive Secretaries of the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific and the Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia to promote intergovernmental and inter-agency coordination and cooperation at the regional and subregional levels in the formulation and

implementation of a regional action programme for the second quinquennium of the Decade;

(d) Invited all Governments, in particular those of the donor countries and others in a position to do so, to contribute to and participate effectively in the implementation of a regional action programme for achieving the objectives of the Decade.

15. In its resolution 1991/75, the Economic and Social Council also requested the Secretary-General to submit to the Council at its regular session of 1992 and every two years thereafter until the end of the Decade a report on the implementation of that resolution.

16. The General Assembly, in its decision 46/453 of 20 December 1991, endorsed Economic and Social Council resolution 1991/75, in particular paragraph 2 of that resolution, in which the Council had recommended that the Assembly change the period of the second quinquennium of the Decade to 1992-1996.

IV. PREPARATION FOR PHASE II OF THE DECADE

A. Modalities of preparation

17. The following practical measures were adopted by the ESCAP secretariat for the preparation of phase II of the Decade. Those measures provided:

(a) That phase II of the Decade should concentrate on regional activities of the greatest impact, developed within the framework of a new regional action programme that would focus on issues that were regional in character or tailored to the common needs of groups of countries within the region;

(b) That existing subregional groupings and intergovernmental organizations, as well as national institutions concerned with transport and communications, should be fully associated with the secretariat in the formulation and implementation of the regional action programme;

(c) That the involvement of commercial expertise in the implementation of the Decade should be encouraged, for example in relation to the management and operation of transport and communications activities;

(d) That the secretariat should play a lead role in coordinating the formulation of the regional action programme;

(e) That the secretariat should establish a compendium of projects undertaken in the transport and communications sectors within the region and provide data and information relating to ongoing and completed projects on a regular basis;

(f) That post-evaluation of selected workshops and seminar-cum-study tours should be undertaken in order to provide guidelines for a model training scheme and for the consistent production of quality training materials.

18. The following modalities were agreed for the formulation of the regional action programme for phase II of the Decade:

(a) Collection of input from member and associate member Governments, and international and intergovernmental organizations, including existing subregional organizations;

(b) Convening of a series of consultative meetings for the formulation of the regional action programme.

19. Member and associate member Governments were to provide the ESCAP secretariat with information on: (a) their national/subregional priorities in the transport and communications sectors, (b) areas and types of activities that could be included in the regional action programme and (c) activities to be undertaken at national and subregional levels in order to supplement regional activities.

20. In this connection, the ESCAP secretariat was to: (a) provide those Governments with advisory services on the preparation of their input, on request; (b) coordinate with subregional organizations as appropriate; (c) utilize technical mission and advisory services to follow up the preparation of input; and (d) coordinate closely with resident representatives of UNDP offices in the region.

21. In relation to the preparation of the regional action programme, international and intergovernmental organizations, including existing subregional organizations, endorsed the value of the following:

(a) A common approach for the identification and submission of activities that each agency planned to undertake within its own mandate;

(b) A cross-sectoral integrated approach for addressing the priority issues in the transport and communications sectors within the region and for identifying relevant activities that should be followed;

(c) The recommendation that the activities to be implemented as part of the regional action programme should be supported wherever possible by the implementation of national activities.

22. The consultative meetings comprised the following:

(a) Inter-agency Working Group Meeting on Phase II of the Transport and Communications Decade for Asia and the Pacific (1992-1996), held at Geneva on 10 and 11 September 1991;

(b) Joint Meeting of the Inter-agency Consultative Group and Senior Government Officials on Phase II of the Transport and Communications Decade for Asia and the Pacific (1992-1996), held at Bangkok from 2 to 4 December 1991;

(c) Meeting of Senior Government Officials in Preparation for the Meeting of Ministers Responsible for Transport and Communications, scheduled to be held at Bangkok, on 1 and 2 June 1992;

(d) Meeting of Ministers Responsible for Transport and Communications, second session, scheduled to be held at Bangkok from 3 to 5 June 1992.

B. Preparatory activities

23. In accordance with the modalities of preparation, the regional action programme was formulated by the secretariat, in close cooperation with member and associate member Governments in the region and the relevant international and intergovernmental organizations, for submission to the Meeting of Senior Government Officials.

24. The regional action programme was developed on the basis of the information provided by the developing countries in the region and through the consultative meetings indicated in paragraph 22 above. The following countries were provided with advisory services in this connection: China, Fiji, the Lao People's Democratic Republic, Mongolia, Niue and Papua New Guinea.

25. The following international and intergovernmental organizations participated actively in the formulation of the regional action programme: the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD), the International Labour Organisation (ILO), the International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO), the World Bank, the International Telecommunication Union (ITU), the International Maritime Organization (IMO), the Asian Development Bank (ADB), the Asia-Pacific Telecommunity (APT) and ESCAP itself. In addition, UNDP and three subregional organizations, the Committee on Transport and Communications of the Association of South-East Asian Nations (ASEAN-COTAC), the Forum Secretariat and the Interim Committee for Coordination of Investigations of the Lower Mekong Basin, provided valuable input for the preparation of the regional action programme. UNDP also provided financial assistance for the formulation of the regional action programme.

26. Having agreed to formulate the regional action programme through inter-agency cooperation, the concerned international and intergovernmental organizations also undertook, at the request of UNDP, a joint exercise in the formulation of a single transport and communications programme for Asia and the Pacific, for submission to UNDP for funding under its fifth intercountry programming cycle.

27. The Meeting of Ministers will also consider the issue of resource mobilization for the implementation of the regional action programme.

Part two: Activities undertaken by the secretariat of the Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia

I. BACKGROUND AND PRESENT STATUS

28. The idea of a Transport and Communications Decade for Asia and the Pacific was initiated by ESCAP at its thirty-eighth and thirty-ninth sessions. In this regard, resolution 230 (XXXVIII) 2/ was adopted on 1 April 1982 and resolution 234 (XXXIX) 3/ on 29 April 1983.

29. In its resolution 1983/69 of 29 July 1983, the Economic and Social Council endorsed resolution 234 (XXXIX) of ESCAP and called upon the Economic Commission for Western Asia (ESCWA) to take appropriate action to collaborate with the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific for the incorporation of the Western Asian region in the programme of action for the decade (operative para. 5).

30. On 27 April 1984, at its fortieth session, ESCAP adopted resolution 236 (XL) on the Proclamation of the Transport and Communications Decade for Asia and the Pacific, 1985-1994.

31. In its resolution 1984/78 of 27 July 1984, the Economic and Social Council endorsed ESCAP resolution 236 (XL) and requested the Secretary-General to extend, within existing resources, all necessary facilities and support to the Executive Secretaries of the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific and the Economic Commission for Western Asia in their elaboration of a practical and integrated regional action programme for the Decade and to mobilize the necessary international support for the successful implementation of the programmes for the Decade (operative para. 4).

32. A Transport and Communications Decade for Asia and the Pacific during the period 1985-1994 was proclaimed by the General Assembly in its resolution 39/227 of 18 December 1984. In that resolution (para. 2), the General Assembly requested the Secretary-General to extend all necessary facilities and support to the Executive Secretaries of the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific and the Economic Commission for Western Asia in their development of the regional action programme for the Decade in a practical and integrated manner and to mobilize the necessary international support for the successful implementation of the programmes for the Decade, bearing in mind the contents of the seventh preambular paragraph of resolution 236 (XL) of the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific.

33. The ESCWA secretariat, at the end of 1983, began to take part in the preparation of activities pertaining to the Decade by participating in the meeting of the Ad Hoc Intergovernmental Group on the preparation for the Decade held at ESCAP headquarters in Bangkok from 10 to 13 October 1983.

34. In this framework, the Transport and Communications Division of ESCWA prepared a background paper that was submitted to ESCWA at its eleventh

session and to the second session of ESCWA's Standing Committee for the Programme (April 1984). The Standing Committee, in resolution 3 (II) of 26 April 1984, requested the secretariat to prepare and submit to the next session, for approval, a draft programme of action for the Decade in Western Asia.

35. On the basis of resolution 3 (II) mentioned above, the Transport and Communications Division prepared a draft programme of action for the Decade in Western Asia which was submitted to the ESCWA Technical Committee (formerly designated the Standing Committee for the Programme) at its third session, held in April 1985 (see document E/ECWA/XII/CP/5/Add.1). After adopting the plan of action (published under the title Programme of Action for the Transport and Communications Decade in Western Asia (1985-1994) (E/ESCWA/TCT/85/6)), the Technical Committee recommended the adoption of a resolution on the Decade to the Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia at its twelfth session. On 24 April 1985, the Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia adopted resolution 138 (XII) on the Transport and Communications Decade for Asia and the Pacific 4/ in which it requested the Executive Secretary to coordinate and to follow up the Decade's activities undertaken in the Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia and the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific regions. In that resolution, the Commission also invited member States to promote the Decade's activities and to participate and contribute in the implementation of the programme of action for achieving the objectives of the Decade in the ESCWA region.

36. In accordance with the above-mentioned resolution and to apprise ESCWA of the ESCWA secretariat's preliminary activities pertaining to the Decade, a report was submitted to ESCWA at its fourteenth session, held from 31 March to 5 April 1987 (E/ESCWA/C.1/14/5/Add.1). Through this report, member countries were informed of the activities carried out by the ESCWA secretariat in 1985-1986 and on future actions pertaining to the Decade to be undertaken by the ESCWA countries.

37. Moreover, a specific programme element 1.6, entitled "Activities of the Transport and Communications Decade for Asia and the Pacific (1985-1994) in Western Asia", was introduced in the work programme for the biennium 1988-1989 of the ESCWA Transport and Communications Division.

38. In the area of follow-up activities, the ESCWA Transport and Communications Division carried out, during the period May 1987-September 1988, the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) project concerning preparatory assistance for the Decade's implementation in Western Asia (Project RAB/86/052/A/16/55).

39. This project was approved by UNDP in November 1986 and became operational in May 1987. It was planned for a six-month period with a total of 20 consultant work-months, requiring a UNDP input of US$ 200,000. The immediate objectives of the project were to assess the transport and communications situation in the ESCWA region within the framework of the Decade and to

identify thrust areas for regional action. The project also aimed at establishing appropriate machinery for consultation and coordination on the Decade programmes at the national and regional levels. The output envisaged within the framework of the project included the preparation of reports on (a) the survey of existing transport and communications systems in the ESCWA region, emphasizing planned projects and future trends as perceived by national authorities; (b) identification of major thrust areas for regional action, strategies and programmes; and (c) proposals pertaining to the establishment of a network for consultation, coordination and follow-up of the ESCWA Decade programmes. The main objective of this project was to enable the ESCWA secretariat to launch Decade activities in Western Asia in accordance with ESCWA, Economic and Social Council and General Assembly resolutions.

40. The project team was composed of a team leader and one consultant in each of the following fields: roads, maritime transport, railways, air transport and telecommunications. The team visited selected member countries (Egypt, Iraq, Jordan, Kuwait, Saudi Arabia, the Syrian Arab Republic and Yemen) during the period from June to October 1987. A staff member of the Division accompanied these missions. Information and data collected were utilized for the drafting of the final report on the project, published in September 1988 as the Project Report on Preparatory Assistance in the Programme for the Transport and Communications Decade in Western Asia (1985-1994) (E/ESCWA/TCD/88/IG.1/3 and Corr.1).

41. The project report included a detailed analysis of current transport and communications infrastructure and facilities in Western Asia and outlined the main problems of these sectors; it also identified 38 thrust areas for further action and described their main features. The report covered 52 project profiles with cost estimates, as well as organizational and institutional measures to be undertaken within the framework of projects and programmes for the next decade.

42. Another output envisaged in the UNDP preparatory assistance document, entitled "Assistance in Programming for the Transport and Communications Decade in Western Asia", was a proposal on the establishment of a network for consultation, coordination and follow-up on the ESCWA Decade Programme. A consultant's report examining such a network in detail was prepared and published in November 1988 under the title Establishment of a Consultation and Co-ordination Machinery on the Transport and Communications Decade in Western Asia (E/ESCWA/TCD/88/IG.1/4).

43. In accordance with the above-mentioned project document on implementation of the Decade and under programme element 1.6 of the Division's work programme for the biennium 1988-1989, the ESCWA secretariat held the Intergovernmental/Inter-agency Meeting on the Transport and Communications Decade in Western Asia, at Baghdad from 13 to 15 December 1988.

44. Through the report of the Executive Secretary to the Commission (E/ESCWA/C.1/15/4/Add.6) of 15 February 1989, the ESCWA secretariat informed ESCWA at its fifteenth session on activities of the Decade, including the Decade's project implementation and the Intergovernmental/Inter-agency Meeting.

45. On the basis of the Executive Secretary's report, ESCWA at its fifteenth session adopted on 18 May 1989 resolution 170 (XV) on the activities of the Transport and Communications Decade in Western Asia (1984-1994), 5/ in which it invited the Executive Secretary to give the requisite priority to the activities of the Decade and member States to promote the activities of the Decade.

46. Furthermore, programme element 1.6 entitled "Activities of the Transport and Communications Decade for Asia and the Pacific (1985-1994) in Western Asia" was incorporated into the work programme of the Transport and Communications Division for the biennium 1990-1991. That programme element envisaged:

(a) Substantive servicing of an intergovernmental meeting on the Decade;

(b) Preparation of a report to ESCWA at its sixteenth session;

(c) Operational activities consisting of backstopping and support for the Decade projects and programmes to be implemented in the ESCWA region.

47. With a view to further pursuit of the Decade's activities, the ESCWA secretariat prepared an umbrella project with a budget of $1.6 million covering the remaining six years of the Decade period (1989-1994). This project proposal was presented to UNDP for funding on 13 April 1989; however, UNDP could not cover ESCWA's requirements from special programme resources and consideration of this request was postponed until the mid-term review of the regional programme. That mid-term review meeting took place in Damascus from 14 to 16 October 1990 and did not recommend any action in this context.

48. The follow-up on implementation of the Decade has thus far been hampered by a lack of funds. ESCWA had been under the impression that UNDP, since it was assisting ESCAP, would continue to assist it in the Decade programme for the ESCWA region. However, the financing anticipated for this purpose has not materialized: while a sum in the amount of $5 million for Decade activities was channelled to ESCAP, no UNDP funding was provided to ESCWA to enable it to embark on implementation of the Decade projects.

49. In the above connection, it is also relevant to mention the following other developments:

(a) Cooperation between ESCWA and the League of Arab States (LAS) was strengthened and an agreement on cooperation in the transport sector was signed in 1988;

(b) Within the framework of this agreement, the Transport and Communications Division (TCD) of ESCWA participated in the various meetings of Arab transport ministers (in 1988 and 1989) and assisted in the formulation of a transport strategy subsequently adopted by those ministers;

(c) In the context of the agreement with LAS, TCD, inter alia, identified two projects from among the priority activities envisaged for the Decade, preparing proposals for them (both projects were submitted to UNDP during 1988 for funding. However, UNDP stressed its preference for one umbrella project linked to the Transport and Communications Decade):

(i) A transport information system;

(ii) An Arab bureau for ship classification;

(d) ESCWA also participated in the second regular session of 1991 (held in Geneva) of the Economic and Social Council, which adopted resolution 1991/75 on phase II of the Transport and Communications Decade for Asia and the Pacific, 1985-1994. In that resolution, the Economic and Social Council placed ESCAP and ESCWA on the same footing;

(e) Since completion of the project report on preparatory assistance for the decade, TCD has prepared its successive programme budgets in accordance with the thrust areas and project profiles identified in that report.

Notes

1/ Official Records of the Economic and Social Council, 1991, Supplement No. 14 (E/1991/35), chap. IV.

2/ Ibid., 1982, Supplement No. 10 (E/1982/20), chap. IV.

3/ Ibid., 1983, Supplement No. 12 (E/1983/43), chap. IV.

4/ Ibid., 1985, Supplement No. 14 (E/1985/35), chap. IV.

5/ Ibid., 1989, Supplement No. 17 (E/1989/36), chap. III.